

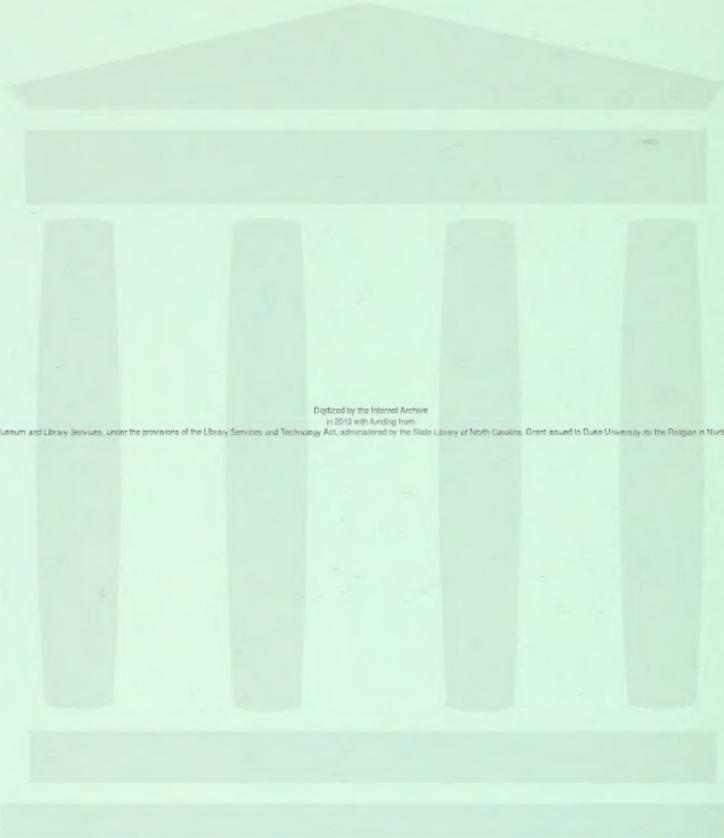
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# The History of Ballard's Bridge Baptist Church 1781-1981



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HISTORY

of

BALLARD'S BRIDGE BAPTIST CHURCH

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## PREFACE

The aim of this pamphlet is to give you a glimpse of the work of the Lord through the organization and survival of Ballard's Bridge Baptist Church. The information was gathered from Mr. J. T. Byrum's HISTORY OF BALLARD'S BRIDGE CHURCH, Minutes of the Church as recorded by the church clerks, research in the local library, and the memory of the members of the church. There are many accomplishments of the church which are not recorded in this pamphlet, as the records have been destroyed or lost. It is hoped that the realization of the need for safe record keeping is accepted so the records will be available to give a more complete account of the church's accomplishments in the future than is given here of the past.

## An Introduction to the History of Ballard's Bridge Baptist Church

Ballard's Bridge Baptist Church in Chowan County, North Carolina, was constituted in 1781. The church house is situated on a beautiful spot of land which falls almost abruptly into a pond, known as the Dillard's Millpond, one of the tributaries of the Chowan River. The church is located on the road, known as the Virginia Road, leading from Suffolk to Edenton, in a beautiful and wealthy farming section of Chowan County. It is about fifteen miles north of Edenton, the county seat of Chowan County.

It is somewhat difficult to find out just when and how Baptist influence reached the neighborhood of Ballard's Bridge. Moore, in his history of North Carolina, states that Sir William Berkley, Governor of Virginia, in 1653, drove the Baptists and Quakers out of Virginia. They found refuge in the region near Albemarle Sound in North Carolina. Morgan Edwards says there were Baptists in North Carolina as early as 1695. Paul Palmer, a native of Maryland, gathered the first Baptist Church in North Carolina in the year 1726, at Chowan about 12 miles north of Edenton. Two years later, Palmer joined with William Burgess and others in the establishment of a church which is now Shiloh -- Shiloh being the oldest surviving Baptist Church in North Carolina. The Church at Chowan did not continue for many years. Joseph Parker, Jr., believed to have been the pastor, moved to the Roanoke Region and established the Meherrin Church which is located near Murfreesboro, North Carolina.

Baptist influence from the Yeopim Church, which was organized near Edenton in 1775, may have reached the neighborhood of Ballard's Bridge; however, the most direct way was through the earnest preaching of Lemuel Burkitt.

Henry Abbott, who left England when young, came to this country joined the Baptist denomination, afterwards becoming a strong, enthusiastic minister of the Gospel. During his ministry, he and Lemuel Burkitt became intimate friends. Several years before Ballard's Bridge Church was organized, Lemuel Burkitt and Henry Abbott held a great meeting in Amelia County, Virginia. When the meeting concluded, Burkitt and Abbott journeyed together until they arrived at Suffolk. There they separated. Abbott returned to his home in Camden County by way of Deep Creek, and Mr. Burkitt journeyed through Gates County on his way towards Edenton. During this day's travel, he became alarmed at the irreligious condition of the people. He stopped that night at the home of a man named Welch in the neighborhood of Ballard's Bridge. He retired, fell asleep, and dreamed an angel appeared to him with a map of the territory over which he had just traveled showing three roads leading from Suffolk on which the Gospel had not been preached. The angel commanded him to secure the help of Elder Jonathan Thomas, who was a man of talent and a great orator; or Elder Jeremiah Dargan, a pious Christian and a very zealous minister of the Gospel, and to preach twice at each of the places indicated. In 1772, Dargan accompanied Burkitt to do the work which they believed God had assigned to them and many people were converted and joined the Wiccacon Church on the west banks of the Chowan River. These meetings resulted in the conversion of Elder David Welch, who afterwards became pastor of Ballard's Bridge Church. In a short while the church was organized.

In connection with the history of this church which has wielded such a powerful influence for the promotion of God's kingdom in Chowan County, and which stands today as a monument to the memory of this great and good man, it seems only fitting here to give a brief sketch of the life of this old veteran of the cross who

finished his pilgrimage with honor to himself and credit to the denomination in which he labored.

At his death there was a short sketch of his life entered upon the old church record of Sandy Run, in Bertie County. This was collected for publication by Thomas M. Pittman. It reads as follows:

"A FEW BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES OF THE LIFE,  
MINISTRY, AND DEATH OF LEMUEL BURKITT, LATE  
PASTOR OF CHRIST'S CHURCH AT SANDY RUN."

"Elder Lemuel Burkitt was born about the year 1750, in Chowan County, of religious parents. Received a good English education. It was the will of God to convert his soul at the age of eighteen, and being convinced of the necessity of believer's baptism as a worthy example laid down by his divine Master, was baptized by Elder Henry Abbott in Pasquotank River, July, 1771, and began to preach the everlasting gospel of Jesus Christ immediately. His father intended him for the law, but his Heavenly Father called him and justified him for a much more honorable office, to be an able minister of the New Testament to proclaim the good news of the Gospel to the Gentile world. It is difficult to give a just narrative of the first several years of this pious man's labors, as there are but few living at this time who are able to follow him in that part of his ministry. But in his travels God was pleased to send him to visit the church at Sandy Run, who had lost their pastor (James Abington), who was their former pastor. Iniquity abounded and the love of many waxed cold. But there were a few names which remained steadfast and orderly church members. The great desire they had for a reformation and revival in the church induced them to petition the Association in 1772 for advice in this matter. The Association, taking the same under consideration, appointed Elders Jonathan Thomas, John Moore, and

Lemuel Burkitt to attend them, who accordingly attended the church, and in conference being assembled, advised the church to relate their experience and come under a re-examination, which they did. The church then established on a new constitution, made choice of Lemuel Burkitt for their pastor, who was accordingly ordained by Elders Thomas and Maglamre, November, 1773, in which capacity he remained during his natural life. He labored in the ministry upwards of thirty-four years. But we may venture to say that there are but few that hath equaled for indefatigable labors and happy success in his pious office. He was a man of strong and steady mind, was well acquainted with men, was a close reasoner, was remarkably methodical in the arrangement of his discourse, and truly orthodox in his theological sentiments, which his writings that are extant will verify. His discourse was generally well adapted to suit the state of religion and the situation of the times when and where he preached; was warm in his address so that he never failed of drawing the attention of this audience, and seldom closed his subject without part of the assembly were in tears.

"His zeal for the cause of God was bold and persevering, was instrumental under the Divine Master in bringing many souls to the knowledge of truth, and more particularly in his latter days his conversation was most turned on the subject of religion. His acquaintances and those who had experienced religion were ever pleased with the mildness of his words and meekness of his expressions. About the year of our Lord 1801, religion appeared to be at a very low ebb in North Carolina. About this time and the year following a glorious work of the Lord took place in the States of Tennessee and Kentucky. The good news reached these regions, when Elder Burkitt set out to realize the truth of common report. After surmounting the fatigues of climbing the lofty mountains in his old age, he reached

the States where the wonderful works of God were displaying the trophies of divine grace. His soul caught the seraphic flame. He preached almost night and day for several weeks in those States with great acceptance, then returned home fired with an ardent zeal surpassing anything we before had seen; communicated the same amongst his own and adjacent churches. Soon after his return, set out to traveling and spent the greater part of his time in preaching day and night. Repeatedly would leave the pulpit, come down among the people, fall on his knees, and with tears rolling down his cheeks, praying sinners in Christ's stead to be reconciled to God.

"From this a glorious revival of religion took place in the churches composing the Kehukee Association, of which he was a member, and in the space of two or three years several thousands were added and a number of new churches constituted. It appeared the revival broke out first in his own church, and it appeared his Lord and Master blessed his labors wherever he preached, and his conduct as a pastor and a preacher was truly amiable and interesting. Ever ready to give each one his portion of meat in due season, was ever faithful in the dishcarge of duty both to saint and sinner, ever ready to advise or instruct those who were blind and needy, and ever ready to give encouragement to those who were seeking to find rest to their souls--thus he continued laboring as a faithful servant in the Lord's vineyard, as an example of piety, until as (himself observed just before his death) his work was done, which appeared in the pulpit, when he was taken with an ague and after a long and painful illness, which he bore with more than common fortitude and resignation to the last moment of his life. And as his life was remarkable for piety and zeal, so was his death for joy and confidence. Whilst going he sung his soul away into the expanded arms of his compas-

sionate Redeemer on the 5th day of November, in the year of our Lord 1807, aged 57 years, and it may truly be said this day, a great man of God is fallen in Israel. Thus it hath pleased the Almighty Disposer of events to take to Himself this amiable character. He has thrown off every burden and has escaped from every snare; the head aches no more, the eyes that have so often wept for poor sinners will weep no more; he has received a final release from trouble and pain and an everlasting discharge from sorrow.

"In the death of this great man of God the church of which he was pastor has sustained a severe and almost irreparable loss, the churches of the Baptist Society a warm, generous, benevolent friend, his afflicted wife and children a kind, tender, affectionate husband and parent, his servants, an indulgent master, the community at large, a consistent and true friend. Elder Burkitt was a true Republican, and was a member of the convention when the Federal Constitution was about to be adopted. His funeral sermon was preached by Elder Spivey on the Fourth Lord's day in November, 1807, to a numerous and attentive audience, from Paul's 2nd Epistle to Timothy, 4th chapter, 6, 7, 8 verses."

## HISTORY OF BALLARD'S BRIDGE BAPTIST CHURCH

The old records of the early history of Ballard's Bridge Baptist Church were consumed by fire from its constitution in 1781 to the 8th day of March, 1818, and the records from 1818 to August 16, 1848, have been lost. Much of this information came from the History of Ballard's Bridge Church as recorded by the Rev. Mr. J. T. Byrum in 1908 and the minutes as recorded by the church clerks.

The preaching by Rev. Lemuel Burkitt and other ministers aroused a deep interest in the people in the neighborhood of Ballard's Bridge. Through the untiring efforts of Rev. Burkitt, the people came together and built a house of worship prior to June, 1780, as shown by the deed.

The land upon which Ballard's Bridge Church now stands was donated by William Bond, of Edenton. The deed was given June 26, 1780. In 1781, the church was organized as Ballard's Bridge Baptist Church.

It may be interesting just here to quote the deed. The deed appears as follows:

### "Deed of Gift:

"Know all men by these presents that I, William Bond, son of Lewis Bond, of the Province of North Carolina and County of Chowan; for the love and esteem I bear to the Baptist Society and for the desire I have to promote religion, I do give unto them a certain parcel of land situated in the county aforesaid near Ballard's Bridge for the use of a meetinghouse where the meetinghouse now stands; the said land being laid off round the meetinghouse as follows:

"Beginning at the main road at a red oak marked tree then by a line of marked trees near a west course to a white oak a corner tree, then by a line of marked trees near a south course to Ballard's Creek Swamp then up the said swamp to the road; then along the road to the first station, containing about two acres of land, be the same more or less, which I promise to warrant and defend the same, and to make a good right and title to the Baptist Society forever with all the rights and privileges thereto belonging. To have and to hold and to enjoy the same free from all lawful claims or demands of any person whatsoever, and this my gift and for the certainty of this being my free consent and gift, I hereunto set my hand and seal, this the 26th day of June, 1780.

WILLIAM BOND (Seal)

Signed, sealed and delivered in the presence of Josiah Speight."

The first church house is said to have been a log building. There is no record of how long they worshipped in this building.

In 1846, people began to show great interest in the Gospel message, and they flocked to the church on preaching days in such numbers that the old house could not accomodate them. It was in this year, 1846, that a contract for a new building was let to William H. Elliott, at the sum of \$1,400. When, in 1847, the contract was completed, Dr. Richard Dillard, William J. Holley, and William H. Elliott gave \$100.00 each, and Mr. John G. Small gave \$50.00. Not one of these gentlemen had ever made any profession of religion at that time, and were not members of any church. In May, 1848, the new house was dedicated. The sermon was preached by Quinton H. Trotman, who has been called the "prince of preachers", to a

large and attentive audience. In August, 1848, a protracted meeting was held in the new building, lasting one week, when William H. Elliott, with 148 more, professed Faith and after they were baptized, united with Ballard's Bridge Church. Mr. Elliott was a man of wealth and remained a good, consistent member of the old church until his death, giving largely of his means to forward the Lord's cause at his old church.

The church house which was built by Mr. Elliott is still standing. This building has been moved to the Small's Crossroads area. In September, 1883, the church met in a regular monthly meeting and let out the house for repair to the lowest bidder. John M. Forehand became the lowest bidder at \$570.00. The work was done according to contract. Mr. Forehand was a prominent man in his county, a man of wealth, and one of the most liberal members of Ballard's Bridge Church.

The sanctuary now in use was built in 1912; additions were added to this building in 1949 and 1957.

#### PASTORS

The Rev. David Welsh was the first pastor of Ballard's Bridge Church. Elder Welsh was converted under the preaching of Elders Jeremiah Dargan and Lemuel Burkitt while they were on their preaching tour which was indicated in Burkitt's dream before Ballard's Bridge Church was organized. He was the pastor of the church until his death. It is almost certain that he served the church without any financial support from the church, as many pastors at that day believed it to be wrong to make any charge for preaching the Gospel.

After the death of Elder Welch, the church was without a pastor for a few years. There is no available record of this trying period, but it is fair to presume that the dear old church house was not forsaken by God's humble servants, who were led by God to assemble at His house for communion and worship.

After a while, Elder John M. Cabe became the pastor of the church. He held this charge until about the year 1804. Then the church was again left pastorless.

Elder John Nowel became the next occasional pastor and so continued during his life. It is very evident that he served the church without any financial support for his labor.

After the death of Elder Nowel, Elder Nathaniel Pruden took occasional charge during his life. He was born in Gates County in 1781, the year in which Ballard's Bridge Church was organized. (It will be remembered that in this same year, October 19, 1781, Lord Cornwallis surrendered to George Washington at Yorktown.) He was the first pastor of Middle Swamp Baptist Church, organized under the leadership of Ballard's Bridge, and continued so until his death in 1815. He was a man of enthusiasm and power, and much of his time was spent in preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ. His preaching was acceptable to the people with whom and for whom he labored, and God greatly blessed his efforts.

At the death of Nathaniel Pruden, the church was again without a pastor for some little time.

About the year 1812, a revival took place, and many were added to the membership of the church. There were two, Miles Welch and John Jordan, among this number who were divinely impressed that the Lord had a great work for

them to do in preaching the Gospel. Soon they began to fulfill their mission in warning sinners to flee the wrath to come.

About the year 1818, Elder Miles Welch was ordained to the full work of the Gospel ministry by Elders Jesse Reid and Thomas Gardner. In 1826, he took the pastoral care of Ballard's Bridge Church and served until 1837. He received very little or no pay for preaching the Gospel. The Church offered to pay him, but he objected to it on the ground that he had never charged anything for preaching and he was glad that he hadn't, for it is not right.

Elder William White was the next pastor. He was born in Chowan County in 1784 and reared in a Quaker family. He was thirty two years old when he professed faith in Christ and joined Ballard's Bridge Church. The church called him as her pastor in 1837, only three years after his conversion. He held this station for twelve years. Though entering the ministry at an advanced age, he led many souls to the Lord. He closed his ministry with honor to himself and credit to the denomination in which he labored.

In 1848, during his ministry, the Chowan Baptist Association adopted some religious principles with which Ballard's Bridge Church disagreed. The church requested the clerk, Mr. Thomas Satterfield, to prepare a letter stating that the church was opposed to the religious principles which were adopted by the Association. The letter stated that they were going to take the New Testament as a guide for their faith and practice.

When Elder White closed his ministry at Ballard's Bridge, the church was again able to look to one of her own members to serve as pastor. The church on May 12, 1849, recommended Daniel V. Etheridge to the next Association for examination and ordination, according to the resolution pass-

ed by the Chowan Association in 1834:

"Resolved, That this Association recommend to the churches that, whenever they wish one of their members ordained, they send him up to the Association for examination and ordination."

This plan was finally abandoned and the ordination of ministers remanded to the church.

Elder Etheridge was ordained August 9, 1849. The presbytery was composed of Elders Quinton H. Trotman, Aaron Jones, and Thomas Waff. Elder Etheridge was a man of prayer and a fluent speaker. On September 8, 1849, he was duly elected pastor of Ballard's Bridge Church. He served the first year without any pastoral support from the church. In January, 1851, the church agreed to pay the pastor \$150.00 which was to be raised by taxation. On the next meeting this motion was remanded and the raising of money for the pastor was put into the hands of the deacons with some other chosen members. They agreed to pay him \$127.00. His salary varied during his ministry which finally closed December, 1869.

His ministry was marked by a general home-coming of sinners, who did not wait for special seasons of revivals to join the church. Up to the Civil War his ministry seemed to have been quiet and progressive, but then came a clash which has no equals in the history of this church. This was a time that tried men's souls. It looked as if the whole church would be wrecked when the war came on. As the war clouds gathered thick and threatening over our country, there were mutterings of vengeance, threatenings of calamity, forecasts of disaster, visions of conflict in the church at Ballard's Bridge.

Many of the church members were slave-holders and a number of these slaves were members of Ballard's Bridge Church. The slaveowners

desired to retain their slaves, and they sought to secure aid through the church with reference to their holding them. They were wealthy and influential men in the church, and they succeeded in influencing the church to adopt the following resolution in June, 1862:

"Resolved, That if any colored member leave home for the purpose of getting with the Yankees, he or she shall be expelled from the church".

In June, 1863, they passed another resolution:

"Resolved, That all white members that have taken up arms and aided the enemy of our country, and all colored members that have run off from their owners, for the purpose of gaining Yankee freedom, be and they are hereby expelled from the church".

Elder Etheridge was a Union man. He preached that secession was not Scriptural and stood for what he believed to be right. He desired to do only those things which would meet the approbation of his great "Task Master". A part of the members stood firm with Elder Etheridge, the other part stood for the Confederacy. In a short while Elder Etheridge was charged with acting inconsistently in visiting the camps of the enemy known as "buffaloes", and preaching doctrines detrimental to the cause of the Southern Confederacy. A committee was appointed to investigate the charge against Elder Etheridge. After two months investigation, they reported that they were unable to find proof of a single charge. In a short while Elder Etheridge confessed before the church that he had acted unwisely, and that he would be more careful next time. On motion Elder Etheridge was unanimously forgiven, but his ministry was greatly crippled.

On account of this trouble, Mr. Isaac Byrum, a faithful servant of God and afterwards a deacon,

was chosen moderator for the year 1863. Elder Etheridge was reelected moderator in 1864, and continued his work until 1869. In this year the strife between the brethren, which took its rise during the war, reached its final culmination. In January, 1869, the clerk, Richard D. Simpson, read out a petition of about fifty members asking letters of dismission to organize another church in the same house. This petition, after some debate, was voted down. Then a part of them withdrew, organized, and called Elder T. J. Knapp for their pastor, and chose their Sunday for preaching. This is known as the "great split" in the church. This state of affairs did not exist long. Elder Etheridge left the church and went to Roanoke Island and Elder T. J. Knapp soon left and went to Indiana.

Elder West Leary was the next pastor. He came to this church when it was in a low spiritual condition. He served three years, 1870-1873. The church agreed to pay him \$125.00 certain, or \$150.00 if the church could raise it. There were some additions to the church under his ministry.

Then Daniel J. Roberts took charge of the church for two years, 1873 and 1874, at a salary of \$135.00. There was one great revival during his ministry in which there were fifty-eight additions to the church.

After two years service by Elder Roberts, the church called the Rev. West Leary the second time. He served four more years, ending December 1878.

Elder T. T. Speight was the next pastor. He served the church nine years. His ministry was a benediction and a source of great strength to the church. During his ministry, there were some great revivals with 208 additions to the church. At the close of his ministry the church

numbered 481 members, and it is said that the missionary spirit increased fourfold.

Elder Speight was born in Gates County and reared in a Christian home. His father, Henry Speight, was a Baptist minister. Brother Speight served in the Civil War, came home, and was convicted of his sins in a great revival held at Middle Swamp Church in 1866. He was convicted of sin on Saturday afternoon. After an all-night prayer meeting at his old home, he returned to the church next day with a message of a loving Saviour to hardened sinners. "A divine spell seemed to hang about him as his words, like thunderbolts, bored their way into the hearts and lives and consciences of sinners old and young."

Elder A. W. Burfoot was the next pastor, who rendered faithful and efficient service to the church for six years. The church found in him a good under shepherd. During his ministry at the church he baptized 94 persons, and many others were added to the church by letter and restoration.

It is believed that he was an old Confederate soldier, who was wounded in the Civil War. He made a profound impression upon many as an earnest Christian with a shepherd's heart. It was during his ministry that Mr. J. T. Byrum, who later became a pastor of Ballard's Bridge Church, was converted, and baptized along with 27 others into the fellowship of Ballard's Bridge Church on October 8, 1893. He was loved for his stainless purity, his shining character as a Christian gentleman, his devout and humble piety and his unswerving loyalty to truth.

Elder C. J. Woodson followed A. W. Burfoot as pastor and served the church two years. He conducted one protracted meeting at the church, the result of which he baptized twenty-three candidates. He was a man who spoke with enthusiasm

and power, not fearing to speak his mind.

"Bro. Woodson was raised in Amelia County, Virginia; was converted and joined the Presbyterian Church. He moved to Richmond, Virginia, and entered the practice of law. He was in the capitol building in Richmond when the building fell and was caught with a vast number of others in the debris. Cursed and bruised and suffocating from lime dust, his soul caught a view of God which it never had before, and his last resolve before losing consciousness was to promise God if rescued he would obey Him in Christian baptism and spend the remainder of his life preaching the Gospel. He was pulled from under the rubbish in a senseless condition, but he kept his promise to his soul and to his God."

Elder Willie B. Waff took charge as pastor of Ballard's Bridge Church, January, 1896, and served faithfully and well for ten years. During his faithful ministry, there was an additional average of twenty members each year. There was a growth in the spirit of giving. The first year of his pastorate, the church gave for missions and benevolence \$129.83. The last year the church gave \$259.86. Some years, when there were special objects such as the Baptist University, Chowan Baptist Female Institute (Chowan College), and the Orphanage, the church gave over \$400.00 a year. During the year 1903, the church gave \$492.32. The church paid Bro. Waff \$250.00 for his service. When he left, there was a good missionary society connected with the church doing some good work for the Master.

Elder Waff was no pulpit orator, but those who sought to know God's will and were hungering for the truth found in him a faithful exponent of God's word. His pure example, and the gentle spirit which characterized his home life showed that he lived the Gospel as well as preached the

## Gospel.

Elder J. N. Booth was the next pastor. After serving one month, he resigned to take a field in South Carolina.

Elder J. O. Alderman followed Elder Booth, taking charge in February, 1906. Soon after Bro. Alderman took charge as pastor, the sickness of his wife and his own ill health prevented the church from getting the full value of his fertile mind. Under his leadership the present sanctuary was built in 1912, and dedicated in June, 1913. This building was constructed by Frank Muth.

The Rev. A. A. Butler came as pastor about 1915, and while he was serving the church, the first parsonage was erected by Noah Ward at a cost of \$7,500.00. This was located at about one mile south of the church. Mr. Butler left the church in 1922.

The Rev. J. R. Taylor was the next pastor and served from 1922 till 1927. During his ministry the floor in the choir area was raised to the level of the pulpit floor. In 1923 the church witnessed a great revival with 57 additions under the preaching of the Rev. Mr. Jenkins.

The Rev. W. T. C. Briggs was the next pastor and he served the church from 1927 till 1929 for a salary of \$1,300.00.

In 1930, the Rev. J. T. Byrum, who was raised in the Ballard's Bridge community and ordained by the church, was called to serve as the pastor. During his pastorate, the indebtedness for the parsonage was paid off. In 1934 the church voted to designate a part of the church ground to be used as a cemetery for its members. We can appreciate the labors of Mr. Byrum today in the beauty of the cedars around the church and the oaks along the driveway which he set out during

his tenure. His salary ranged from \$500.00 to \$1,500.00. During this time the church had preaching twice monthly. Mr. Byrum served the church until 1947.

The Rev. J. W. Davis was the next pastor beginning his ministry in 1948, and he served as the church's first fulltime pastor, for a salary of \$3,600.00. During his ministry, B. T. U. was organized in the church and the assembly room, six classrooms, and two rest rooms were added to the back of the sanctuary, at a cost of approximately \$5,500.00. He resigned this pastorate in 1951.

The next pastor to serve the church was The Rev. R. W. Knight. He came in 1951 and at this time the church began having Sunday night preaching services for the first time. Mr. Knight's beginning salary was \$4,000.00. During this pastorate the old parsonage was sold and a new one built across the highway in front of the church on land donated by H. R. Peele. This was built by Edenton Construction Company at a cost of \$19,000.00. Mr. Knight resigned his duties May 31, 1956.

In August, 1956, the Rev. Lamar Sentell was called to serve as the church's next pastor. His starting salary was \$4,300.00. On December 23, 1956, the note for the parsonage was burned, thereby clearing the church of this indebtedness. Mr. Sentell was a strong worker in the church's organizations and during this time the Sunday School had as many as 250 in attendance and Training Union had as many as 140. It was during this time that a heating plant was installed in the church. Also, in 1957 a two story addition was added containing 15 rooms. This building was brick veneer and cost approximately \$15,000.00. The work was done mostly by members of the church under the supervision of W. Jennings Bunch. Mr. Sentell resigned his pastorate with

the church in the summer of 1960.

The Rev. Carl Hart was the next pastor and served the church from early 1961 thru summer, 1962. The Rev. Ben Fisher served as the interim pastor from this time until the spring of 1963.

The church called the Rev. George H. Cooke in April, 1963 to serve as its pastor, and he has continued to serve the church until the present. During Mr. Cooke's pastorate, the church has made several accomplishments. A new piano and organ was purchased to be used in the sanctuary. The sanctuary windows were reworked in 1965. Also that year a scholarship fund was established for students entering the ministry. In 1966, the church was richly blessed, with the church's best year yet financially, and a very successful revival with 21 additions to the church. In 1967, the driveways and walkways were paved and the sanctuary was air conditioned. The cathedral light fixtures that are now in use in the sanctuary were dedicated October 26, 1969.

On November 2, 1969, during a severe electrical storm, this being early on Sunday morning, the educational building was damaged by fire. The amount of this damage was more than \$15,000.00. The repairs of this building were done by Haywood Jones, and at this time one room was converted to a kitchen.

In 1971, Welch's Chapel was destroyed by fire and Ballard's Bridge members took an offering to help in the rebuilding of their church. In July of that same year the church approved the remodeling of the front and the bricking of the unbricked portion of the building for a cost of approximately \$47,000.00. This work was completed and a dedication service was held in December, 1972. The note burning for this indebtedness was held on January 16, 1977.

Central air-conditioning was installed in the parsonage in 1978. In 1979, a sound system was purchased to be used by the choirs, also the driveways and walks around the parsonage were paved and the ones around the church were resurfaced. At this time a ramp for the handicapped was constructed on the south side of the church.

During Mr. Cooke's ministry, the church has grown spiritually and five young men have been called into full time Christian service. Mr. Cooke is known throughout the entire community for his friendliness and ministry to the people in need.

#### MINISTERS AND LAYMEN

In the ministry of this church, it has given to the world some ministers and laymen who have labored and are laboring to bless humanity. For the lack of information and space, only a few can be mentioned here:

Elder John Asplund was born in Sweden and trained for mercantile pursuits. He went to England as a clerk in 1775. Having left the mercantile business, he joined the British Navy and settled in Eastern North Carolina.

In 1782, a year after Ballard's Bridge Church was organized, he was converted and baptized into the fellowship of Ballard's Bridge Church by Elder David Welch, the first pastor. He afterwards moved to Southampton County, Virginia, and was ordained. Then he spent several years traveling through Northern Europe. On his return, he made a tour of the Baptist churches of the United States to obtain the necessary information for his "Baptist Register" which he published in 1791. In his introduction he says: "I have

traveled about 7,000 miles in about eighteen months, chiefly on foot, and visited about 215 churches and fifteen Associations. Having been brought up with a view to business of merchandise, I am accustomed to keeping accounts; and I now prefer accounts of souls with their faces set Zionward, to those which only respect money or trade. I have a natural turn for traveling, and I am convinced that I could not better spend my time than in itinerating to preach the Gospel and to collect material which may assist the future historian." He afterwards traveled 10,000 miles, and published another Register in 1794. It is said that Morgan Edwards, Isaac Backus, R. B. Semple, and John Asplund are the greatest literary benefactors of American Baptists. He was drowned while attempting to cross Fishing Creek, Virginia, in 1807. "The literary work of this Swedish American is rare and costly".

John Jordan was a minister who was converted in a great revival about 1812. No further record of this man could be found.

Mr. James Goodwin was a Methodist at the time of his marriage with Mrs. Catherine Satterfield, a widow and member of Ballard's Bridge Church. No doubt but that it was through the influence and gentle persuasion of his pious wife that he was induced to join the church at Ballard's Bridge, in November, 1846. He was a good and kind man, and became a Baptist minister from the time of his conversion until his death in 1854.

Elder Thomas Brownrig was born in Chowan County in 1769. In his early life he was bitterly opposed to religion and the church. In 1816, he confessed faith in Christ and joined Ballard's Bridge Church. From the time of his conversion, he was an active, useful and well beloved member in his church.

Mr. Andrew A. Parish was a pious, godly man.

Being fully persuaded in his own mind that he was called of God to preach, he applied for license from the church. The church immediately gave him a favorable recommendation. He labored for a while as a colporteur in the bounds of the Yeopim Union meeting, and did some supply work. By some reason or other, he failed to attend college and finally gave up the idea of preaching and went back to his farm where he lived a quiet Christian life until he was killed by a falling tree.

Mr. Alphonso Jordan was ordained by Ballard's Bridge Church in 1929. Although blind Mr. Jordan served his Lord as chaplain for the North Carolina Legislature for 35 years. On occasion, Mr. Jordan supplied in various churches. He, along with his wife, who was also blind, rendered beautiful duets of gospel music. At the time of this writing, he is 81 years old and resides at the N. C. Baptist Home in Winston Salem.

Glenn Bunch, Jr. was ordained December 27, 1970 at Ballard's Bridge Church. He served as pastor in Gladys, Va. and is now working with social services in Snow Hill, North Carolina.

Bruce Copeland was licensed by the church on January 6, 1974. He is presently continuing his education at the Southeastern Seminary at Wake Forest, N. C.

David Cooke, son of the present pastor, was ordained in May, 1977. He served in Wallace, N. C. and is now serving as the Youth Director and Minister of Music at the Emmanuel Baptist Church in Lancaster, S. C.

Kenny Dickerson was licensed by the church in the spring of 1977 and is now serving in Lynchburg, Virginia as an associate pastor.

Stanley Hare was licensed by the church on August 10, 1975. He is now serving as a Missionary Journeyman in Liberia, Africa. Stanley is the first person from Ballard's Bridge Church to serve on a foreign mission field.

#### CHURCHES SPONSORED BY BALLARD'S BRIDGE CHURCH

As early as 1800, Negro slaves were members of Ballard's Bridge Church. However, after the Civil War, they formed a church which is now known as the Greater Welch's Chapel Church.

Ballard's Bridge Church was the mother church of three churches that exist today. The churches organized were Middle Swamp in 1806, Warwick in 1860, and Welch's Chapel in 1866.

#### BENEVOLENCE AND MISSIONS

As far back as there is any record, Ballard's Bridge Church has supported missions. In 1860, the church with sister churches gave to the support of a missionary and colporteur in the Yeopim Union Meeting. The church also gave to the support of colportage work among the soldiers during the Civil War. The first record of giving to the support of Home and Foreign Missions was in 1865. She also aided in the support of the Indian Domestic Mission Board, the Orphanage Asylum at Thomasville and educational institutions.

Since July, 1958, the church has sent \$1,030.00 annually designated to the salary of Ralph Harrell, who is serving as a missionary in Kenya, Africa. However, in 1980, this money was designated to add a classroom to the Tigoni

Baptist Church in Limuru, Kenya, where Mr. Harrell's family attend.

The church has been a regular supporter of the Cooperative Program since its beginning in 1925 and at the present time is giving an increased percentage of the tithes and offerings each year. In 1980, the church gave over \$28,000.00 to missions.

## ASSOCIATIONS

The church first belonged to the old Kehukee Association which was formed in 1769. The Association met in Halifax County, N. C., in May, 1783. At this meeting it was decided to have four occasional associations. One of these met at Ballard's Bridge in August of 1783. It was in the Chowan area that the Baptist took the lead in the work that started the North Carolina Baptist State Convention. This organization was started in 1803 and called the Philanthropic Baptist Missionary Society. The Kehukee Association under the leadership of Martin Ross was the first body of the kind in the United States to take official action in behalf of missions to the heathen and to formulate permanent plans for the support of foreign missions. This was organized in 1805. This action was taken seven years before Judson decided to go as a missionary and nine years before he and Rice were baptized.

The Chowan Association was constituted in 1806, with 40 churches and Ballard's Bridge has been a member of this Association since that time. The Chowan Association has met with the Church at Ballard's Bridge several times.

## SUNDAY SCHOOL

In 1849 the church seeing the increased demand for Scriptural teaching and training of the children in the vicinity of Ballard's Bridge, and realizing the responsibility resting upon the church to win them to Christ, for the church, and for a life of usefulness in His service, agreed that the members should establish a Sunday School or schools in the neighborhood of the church.

The first Sunday Schools of which there is any record were Deep Run, Griffin, Gaulbury, and Wardville. In later years these Sunday Schools were joined together as one Sunday School and met at the church. The church assisted in the work of the Sunday Schools and took up collections from time to time for the purchasing of literature for these schools.

Ballard's Bridge Church has been able to accomplish untold good through the Sunday School. Truly it may be said that the Sunday School is the church at work. Doubtless many souls have been led to Christ by the faithful efforts of godly men and women who have labored in the Sunday Schools.

## CONCLUSION

The history of this church is the history of her perils and deliverances. The Church has been in circumstances of peril. Her enemies have even labored to destroy her; and against these there have been the providence and promise of God. God has been the providence and bulwark of His people. He has been in the midst of His church to preserve her; to extend her interest, and increase her glory. The Church has been assailed

by powerful earthly adversaries, but she is invulnerable so long as she continues faithful to God.

The following resolutions were recorded in the early minutes of Ballard's Bridge Church.

#### RULES OF DECORUM OF BALLARD'S BRIDGE CHURCH

From a long series of experiences, we the Church of Christ, worshiping at Ballard's Bridge, are convinced of the necessity of convening together to worship God as often as convenient; and to hold conference to transact the business of the church, and watch over one another as Christ has commanded. Therefore,

*Resolved*, That the following decorum or set of rules be strictly observed in our conference:

1. We will not forsake assembling ourselves together at the house of God.

2. Conference shall be composed of the members of the church only, unless members from sister churches be present, then it shall be the duty of the moderator to invite them to seats with us who shall be entitled to all the privileges as members of the church, except that of voting upon any question that may be before the conference.

3. Conference shall be opened and closed by prayer to God.

4. One shall be chosen to preside over conference, who shall be addressed under the appellation of Brother Moderator, and unto him every speech shall be particularly addressed.

5. The names of the members being regularly enrolled shall by the clerk be distinctly called over and a notable mark placed to the names of all absent male members.

6. An invitation shall be extended to all that may be desirous to become members of the church. None shall be admitted but by unanimous consent. The candidates shall first give satisfactory evidence of their faith in Christ, secondly, of a change of heart; thirdly, of their willingness to obey God in all His commands, and fourthly, to live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world. When full satisfaction has been obtained, the pastor, or, in his absence, the moderator, shall extend to them the right hand of fellowship and shall receive them in due form.

7. No complaint shall be brought into conference of a private nature until the agreed parties have complied with the directions given by our Lord and Master as recorded in Matt. XVIII. 15-17.

8. No member shall be expelled from the church for any crime, except gross immorality or flagrant violation of Christian character, without being first waited upon by a committee and cited to conference.

9. Every motion made and seconded shall come under the consideration of conference, unless withdrawn by the member who made it.

10. Every query presented shall be twice read, and before it is recorded the moderator shall take the question, and as it is decided so shall it be recorded, provided, however, the querist can withdraw the query at any time.

11. If the minority shall at any time be grieved at the determination of the majority, they are hereby directed to make the same known immediately to the church, and if satisfaction can not be obtained and it shall be necessary to call for help from sister churches, then in the case satisfaction is not given, it shall be the duty of the church to expel such member or members, believing the government according to the laws of Christ always rests with the church.

12. All the business done by conference shall be fairly recorded by the clerk and the same shall be read over distinctly and corrected, if need be,

at the opening of the next conference.

13. Any male member failing to attend conference, the same is disorder, and for failing to attend for three successive meetings shall be waited on by a committee, whose duty it shall be to cite said absentee to the next conference, and he shall give reason of his absence in writing or in person.

14. Any male member leaving conference without liberty of conference the same is disorder.

15. If two or more shall speak at the same time, or any member sitting upon his seat speaking in good health without addressing the moderator, the same is disorder.

16. Any member speaking more than twice upon the same subject without permission of the moderator the same is disorder.

17. Any member being grieved at anything done in conference and shall hold his or her peace and not let the same be known until conference adjourns and shall afterwards speak of the same as not having fellowship therewith the same is hereby deemed disorder.

18. Any member speaking, or acting in wrath, anger, or in a threatening, degrading way, as it is opposed to religion, and wounds the feelings of the true Christian, the same is hereby deemed disorder.

19. If the moderator shall neglect to plainly and timely reprove any member transgressing any of these rules in time of conference the same is disorder in him and himself for the same is liable to be reproved.

## RESOLUTIONS

1. *Resolved*, That if any member of this church is known to be intoxicated with spirituous liquors, unless he confess the same, shall be waited upon by a committee and cited to conference.

For a second offense he shall be expelled from the church, unless he acknowledge his crime to the church, ask forgiveness, and promise not to repeat the offense, in which case he may be excused.

2. *Resolved*, That if any member of the church shall be engaged in buying and retailing spirituous liquors, he or she shall be expelled from the church.

3. *Resolved*, That if any male member fail to attend conference for the space of twelve months without a good excuse rendered he shall be expelled from the church.

4. *Resolved*, That if any member of this church be known to engage in dancing, card-playing, profanity, or if any allow dancing, or card-playing in their houses, they shall be expelled from the fellowship of the church unless they acknowledge their wrongs and promise to do so no more, in which case they may be excused.

5. *Resolved*, That if any male member fail to subscribe and pay to the support of the church by the end of each year, he shall be waited on by a committee; and if he fail to pay or give a good and lawful excuse by March meeting, he shall be expelled.

6. *Resolved*, That the church shall elect its pastor by ballot on Saturday before the second Sunday in August of each year.

7. *Resolved*, That the sexton shall be elected on Saturday before the second Sunday in September of each year.

8. *Resolved*, That the clerk, assistant clerk, and treasurer shall be elected Saturday before the second Sunday in December of each year.

9. WHEREAS, We believe the manufacture and sale of intoxicating liquors, including wine as a beverage, to be detrimental to personal piety and inconsistent with a profession of religion. Therefore,

*Resolved*, That this church will not allow any of her members to engage in such practice.

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### Pastors who have served Ballard's Bridge

David Welsh	1781-1792
John M. Cabe	1800-1804
John Nowel	1806-1816
Nathaniel Pruden	1816-1822
Miles Welch	1826-1837
William White	1837-1849
Daniel V. Etheridge	1849-1869
West Leary	1870-1873
Daniel Roberts	1873-1874
West Leary	1874-1878
T.T. Speight	1878-1887
A.W. Burfoot	1887-1893
C.J. Woodson	1893-1895
Willie B. Waff	1896-1906
J.N. Booth	1906-1 month
J.O. Alderman	1906-1915
A.A. Butler	1915-1922
J.R. Taylor	1922-1927
W.T.C. Briggs	1927-1929
J.T. Byrum	1930-1947
J.W. Davis	1948-1951
R.W. Knight	1951-1956
Lamar Sentell	1956-1960
Carl Hart	1961-1962
George H. Cooke	1963-to present